

**Policy Alert**  
**January 2012 eNewsletter**

**Let Your Voice Be Heard - Reauthorization of the Violence  
Against Women Act (VAWA)**

The legislation to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was introduced in a bi-partisan manner in the U.S. Senate on November 30, 2011 (S. 1925) and already has 23 co-sponsors. Rosie Hidalgo, Casa de Esperanza's Director of Public Policy, has been very active on the policy committee of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence that has been working to draft and advocate for this legislation.

VAWA was first passed in 1994 and has since been reauthorized twice, most recently in 2005. It is due to be reauthorized again in 2011-2012. Advocacy with your members of Congress is critically important at this time to ensure that VAWA is reauthorized with key improvements that will enhance essential prevention and intervention services for women, men and children who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Your participation is important since members of Congress are especially receptive to hearing directly from their constituents about why this legislation is important for the wellbeing of their community. The National Task Force has developed an excellent toolkit in order to provide you with tools to inform and educate your federal legislators and encourage them to sign on as co-sponsors of VAWA, as well as tools to successfully mobilize community support and media coverage in support of VAWA reauthorization. You can access this toolkit on Casa de Esperanza's website by [here](#).

Also, if you are interested in being included on a list to receive weekly policy alerts and updates about VAWA reauthorization and more details about different provisions of VAWA, please send an email to Maritza Valdez at [mvaldez@casadeesperanza.org](mailto:mvaldez@casadeesperanza.org).

**Addressing Secure Communities: Strategies for How to Advocate  
for Immigrant Survivors at Risk Under ICE Enforcement Programs**

Through our policy initiative we have been addressing concerns about the negative impact of "Secure Communities" and other similar

programs that lead to greater entanglement between local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement and that have been shown to have a very detrimental impact on immigrant survivors around the country. Casa de Esperanza organized several webinars on this topic, in conjunction with ASISTA and the National Immigration Project. Over 350 people participated in these webinars which provided information and resources for advocates, as well as strategies to improve advocacy and enhance local law enforcement policies to better assist immigrant survivors. You can access audio recordings of the webinars in either Spanish ([Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> recording](#)) or English ([Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> recording](#)) at Casa de Esperanza's website.

Additionally, there are many helpful resource materials posted on our website, including the [Prosecutorial Discretion Memo issued by ICE](#) (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) that encourages local officials to exercise prosecutorial discretion in cases involving victims or witnesses of crime, and in particular "victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, or other serious crimes." As part of our ongoing policy advocacy efforts, we are monitoring the implementation of programs such as Secure Communities and 287(g) closely, as well as state laws that require local law enforcement to act as immigration officials. If you are aware of any cases in which immigrant victims of DV, SA or trafficking have been caught up in deportation proceedings as a result of efforts to seek help, or where local officials have failed to exercise appropriate prosecutorial discretion on behalf of such victims, please contact Rosie Hidalgo at [rhidalgo@casadeesperanza.org](mailto:rhidalgo@casadeesperanza.org). We would be happy to assist you in your advocacy efforts.